

## **Make Sure Those Easter Eggs Are Safe**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (April 3, 2001)** -- With the arrival of Easter, the Cabinet for Health Services wants to help make sure every Kentucky family has a safe and happy holiday.

Many Kentucky families enjoy the coloring and consumption of Easter eggs.

Although eggs are typically a safe food product when cooked and handled properly, the following tips should help cooks reduce the risk of any food-related illness associated with the consumption of Easter eggs at home, according to Guy Delius, manager of the Food Safety Branch in the Department for Public Health.

- Purchase and use commercially packaged refrigerated eggs from your local grocer, or ones sold pursuant to Kentucky's egg marketing law.
- Eggs are considered a potentially hazardous food in that they will spoil or allow the growth of harmful bacteria if not handled properly.
- Keep fresh eggs refrigerated until it's time to cook them.
- If the eggs will be boiled for decorating, be sure to boil the eggs thoroughly until the egg yolk and white is fully cooked and firm.
- After boiling of the eggs, the eggs should be "air cooled" and not cooled with cold water.
- If cold water is used to cool the boiled eggs, the negative pressure in the egg may draw in unwanted water and bacteria into the egg.
- Refrigerate boiled eggs soon after boiling in shallow containers so they will cool quickly.
- When coloring the eggs, be sure to only use approved food grade materials. No Magic Markers or common pens or inks should be used to color eggs.
- Be sure work surfaces and utensils are clean before use, and after use they should be cleaned with hot soapy water, rinsed and sanitized with approved sanitizing agent (1 tablespoon of unscented bleach per 2 gallons of water).
- Always be sure to wash your hands before and after handling eggs.
- Never leave eggs at room temperature for longer than 2 hours, even after they have been boiled.

Delius says you should also take care when hiding the eggs to avoid areas which may contaminate the eggs, such as around pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects, very young children, and areas around chemicals or fertilizers for home or lawn. These areas should be avoided when hiding your eggs.

Delius also says you should not eat broken or cracked eggs or eggs which have been out of refrigeration for longer than 2 hours.